

## Ep #32: Managing Anxiety as a New NP



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Sarah Michelle**

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Welcome to *Becoming a Stress-Free Nurse Practitioner*, a show for new NPs and students that want to pass their board exam the first time and make that transition from RN to NP as seamless as possible. I'm your host Sarah Michelle. Now, let's dive into today's episode.

Hello my friends. We talk so much about managing your anxiety before your board exam. But in my new nurse practitioner group on Facebook I see so many posts asking about how to manage your anxiety when you actually get into practice.

This can be such a difficult time to manage your mind as you're bombarded with be new again, as well as some pretty intense feelings of imposter syndrome. As always though, I have a few solid tools that you can utilize to help ground yourself and get you through those first few months, up to even that first year of practice.

You have been preparing to enter into this profession for years now, literal years. And so while that anxiety can feel a little bit overwhelming at first, we can manage it together because you can absolutely do this. I have no doubt in my mind.

If you have graduated nurse practitioner school and if you have passed your board exam, you are ready to be the real deal. You just have to own it. And we're going to talk about that in this episode.

And so I'm hoping that for at least some of you, you're going to listen to this episode as you're either waiting to start a job or when you just started your first job. And my first big piece of guidance to dampen down that anxiety is to ensure that you receive the orientation time you need.

This is something I talk heavily about in my job hunt course, because not receiving enough orientation time is one of the biggest sources that imposter syndrome likes to feed off of. When I got my first job offer, because I had already done clinicals there, they told me that I wouldn't need orientation time. I was going to be on my own from day one. And that is not how you want to start out, guys.

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You need time to build up your comfort and ultimately build up your confidence as you figure out your new groove and rhythm as a provider. Even if you have already done clinicals there, it will be a totally different experience for you to be functioning solo and on your own.

You know many times during clinicals important components of being a provider, like billing and coding, are simply overlooked and not emphasized. You want to be absolutely sure that you are ready to see your expected patient load and manage your time well in this new environment.

If at all possible, it's also ideal to have a plan in place to gradually move you into a full patient load. You know, maybe your first week on your own after orientation, you only see 50% of what you would normally be expected to see. Then maybe on week two or three on your own 70% of what you would be normally expected to see, and then so on from there.

This gradual phasing in process allows for you to figure out how you work best on your own so that you don't start spinning and you don't get lost in overwhelmed, because it's so easy to do.

And so those of you who are listening and have job offers for a job without orientation time, I would really implore you to dig deep and see if that's really going to be the best fit for you. Even when you're an experienced provider I would still never suggest taking a job that doesn't allow you that orientation time that you are going to need.

New workflows, new charting, new types of patients, all of that stuff takes time to acclimate to no matter how long you've been a nurse practitioner or no matter what your experience is.

Now my next strategy of combating anxiety in practice is to make sure that you have all of your resources available and ready to use from day number one. When you're new to any medical profession you have the knowledge base, you absolutely have, I know you do.

But you oftentimes lack the confidence until you gain that experience component. You are going to want to double check yourself, you are going

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to want to ensure that you are providing the best and most optimal care for every patient. And that is 1,000% okay. And I definitely recommend that you do what you need to make yourself comfortable as you continue to learn and grow.

This is definitely a profession where assessment tools, treatments, tons of things change very frequently as more evidence-based practice becomes available to us. For this reason I don't really like utilizing printed text as much. But a resource that I know many of my students use in practice is that five minute clinical consult if you enjoy having something printed, or you work in a practice that does not always have internet service available.

Outside that resource my personal favorites to have pulled up definitely are Epocrates and Medscape. I found them both to be super user friendly. And I love having the ability to have them pulled up at all times whenever I need them. This allows you to quietly and unknowingly to the patient double check yourself whenever you may need.

The biggest thing is not necessarily what source you use, but instead just the fact that you have something ready to go at your disposal whenever you need to boost up that confidence and know for sure you're making the right decision.

When you feel the need to scramble to find information, or you're digging for sources, that's when you start to get really anxious. That's when we're starting to feed that imposter syndrome monster. It's not that you don't know the information, you just need that little double check for your comfort.

And this is especially important for things like drug dosages and other things that I consider to be look up information. Remember, that's why you were not tested on your board exam about drug dosages. Because they anticipate that that is information you will be able to readily look up as you need it.

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And so don't be so hard on yourself if you're looking things up. It means you care. It means that you are truly providing the best care that you possibly can for your patients.

Up next is a tip that goes along with what I was just saying, and it's just the simple validation that it is absolutely okay to ask questions as a new provider. Hear that again, it is absolutely okay to be asking questions as a new provider.

Do not be ashamed to ask your questions, do not be ashamed to ask for the help that you need to battle your anxiety. The vast majority of you out there will not be working alone and therefore you're going to have colleagues to turn to you for questions and sometimes even second opinions.

Even if you are a solo provider in a clinic, such as an urgent care, that is a great opportunity to start up a group chat with those you went to school with or providers that maybe work on different days in that clinic. So that way, when you have questions that arise, everybody can discuss together.

I saw HIPAA approved group chats countless times in my clinical rotations with solo providers. Your colleagues are not going to look down on you for asking questions. And on the rare occasion that someone does, that reflects on them more than it does on you by a long shot.

Now, I have to pause here, I have to stop, this is a hard stop y'all. I do want to include an incredibly important caveat. It's a little bit unrelated but related, so please listen up. Social media is not the place to ask patient care questions. Please, please, please.

I hate to even include that in this episode. But I have seen providers across all medical professions lose their jobs over that. And so please, please, please do not be that person. It is not ever worth the risk, even if it's HIPAA compliant, period.

Do not post your questions on public platforms like Facebook, even if it is a private group. You have no idea who else could be in that group or what

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might be reposted of yours out of context. And so always just be extra cautious and safe and avoid that altogether, please.

All right, now let's get back on topic after my little social media tangent there. Lastly, just like you had your resources ready to go, have a plan ready to go to. You are going to know what exactly is going to work best for you when you're feeling super amped and super anxious in practice.

And I learned as a nurse that if I was getting overwhelmed, then it was best for me to go to a private space like the bathroom or a locker room to just take a minute and take a breath. So you can do whatever worked for you as a nurse when you're a nurse practitioner too. So make sure you utilize those skills.

Really the big thing is just you want to avoid being blindsided with no plan of attack on how to move forward. So before you ever walk into your job for the day, run through your mental plan of what you're going to be doing if things start to go awry and you start to get anxious. Because feeling prepared, feeling like you have that plan in place will make you feel as if you have a leg up if that anxiety monster decides to rear its ugly head.

And in full transparency, a big part of my plan is always running through my list of tangibles again. For those of you who this is your very first podcast episode or you didn't do board preparation with me, your list of tangibles is a list of your accomplishments and why you deserve to be a nurse practitioner.

It can include your schooling, your experiences, your clinical rotations, passing your board exam. Literally whatever you want can be on this list. And it just serves as a simple and quick reminder that you're exactly where you're supposed to be. You have all the preparation you need to serve in this role because you have been working so hard for so long to be here. You really just have to believe that for yourself.

You have everything you need already. So you just have to figure yourself out a little bit in that first year of practice and then it will all come together. And that is it for this episode, guys. While these tips were intended to

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dampen down your anxiety, I think a lot of them ended up being geared towards imposter syndrome as well. Which I may eventually just dedicate an entire episode to because it's so prevalent.

And I really hope this episode served as a gentle reminder for you that you belong as a nurse practitioner. And you have a lot of tools that you can utilize when feelings of imposter syndrome, or doubt, or anxiety, or whatever that looks like pops up for you.

Not every day will be perfect. But as you go along and as you gain more experience and knowledge, that confidence will begin to rise and you're not going to need these tools as much anymore. But regardless of where you're at, know that I'm rooting for you, and I will always be your internal cheerleader in the background. And that's it, I'll talk to you guys next week.

As an extra bonus friends, if you're looking for support no matter what phase of your nurse practitioner journey that you're currently in I have communities available for both students and new nurse practitioners. In these communities, we work to uplift one another and grow this profession together every single day. Links to join will be included for you in the show notes.

Thanks for listening to *Becoming a Stress-Free Nurse Practitioner*. If you want more information about the different types of support we offer to students and new NPs, visit [stressfreenp.com](https://stressfreenp.com). See you next week.